

Executive Summary
Diverse Ability Incorporated

Emerging Me: Middle School Matters is an inclusive, self-discovery, and leadership capacity building program for youth who are in the intermediate grades between elementary and high school, to assist them in developing and embracing their identity, leading to enhanced self-advocacy, and the practice of self-determination.

Designed to equalize and unify youth in a shared process, Emerging Me: Middle School Matters, will afford youth who do and do not have disabilities opportunities to learn about the intersectionality of their diversities and common life experiences. Using a modified version of the Arizona Youth Leadership Forum (AZYLF) for Students and Transitioning Young Adults Who Have Disabilities Self-Discovery Curriculum, youth from all backgrounds will engage in personal and group activities that manifest into development of a Self-Advocacy Plan, using Person Centered Planning and Practices.

Emerging Me: Middle School Matters activities will be facilitated by youth who have disabilities from across Arizona, who are graduates of the Arizona Youth Engagement Academy (AZYEA), an intensive training experience designed to build capacity in youth who have disabilities to assume leadership roles and provide peer to peer mentoring, training, and support. AZYEA graduates represent diversity in all aspects, and include people who have intellectual and developmental disabilities.

Partners such as: Arizona Community of Practice on Transition core team, Arizona Employment First Initiative, Sonoran University Center on Excellence in Developmental Disability, Raising Special Kids, Office for Children with Special Health Care Needs, and Special Olympics Arizona, will be instrumental in recruitment efforts, as well as in providing resources for individuals, families, and communities.

Key staff include Program Director, Melissa Ann Santora, Founding Executive Director of Diverse Ability Incorporated, a youth who has a disability, who will be hired as a Youth Engagement Coordinator, and AZYEA graduates who will volunteer to deliver the Self-Discovery training and facilitate Self-Advocacy Plans.

The total Program Cost of Emerging Me: Middle School Matters is \$68,707. Diverse Ability Incorporated requests \$51,530 in funding through this process, and offers a Non-Federal Match of \$17,177.

Budget Request Form

Contractor Name: Diverse Ability Incorporated

Contractor Address: PO Box 46316 Phoenix AZ 85063
Street Address City State Zip

Project Name: Emerging Me: Middle School Matters

Budget Category	Requested ADDPC Funds	Non-Federal Cash Match	Non-Federal In-Kind Match	Total Program Cost
Personnel/Salaries	\$28,100		\$9,000	\$37,100 -
Fringe Benefits	\$8,430			\$8,430 -
Supplies / Operating Expenses	\$7,150		\$1,602	\$8,752 -
Travel	\$7,850		\$1,625	\$9,475 -
Rent or Cost of Space			\$4,950	\$4,950 -
Contracted Services / Professional Services				-
Administrative / Indirect Costs				-
Total Costs	\$51,530 -	-	\$17,177 -	\$68,707 -

It is understood that Non-Federal Funds identified in this budget will be used to match only ADDPC Federal Funds, and will not be used to match any other Federal Funds during the period of the ADDPC funded Project.

Additional description and background information shall be included as a budget narrative, including for match. The contractor agrees to submit additional background information to the ADDPC upon request.

Melissa Ann Santora

Name of Certifying Official

Founding Executive Director

Title of Certifying Official

406-498-3483

Phone

diverseabilityincorporated@gmail.com

Email

Applicant's Qualifications Questionnaire
Diverse Ability Incorporated

1. The mission of Diverse Ability Incorporated is to create and promote access, equality, inclusion, and brave spaces for embracement of diversity, through heightened knowledge, enhanced skills, and experiential learning, growth, and personal development. Diverse Ability Incorporated is intended to provide and expand services to assist and support the intersectionality of diversity in people, with a focus on youth empowerment, self-determination, human and civil rights, social justice, personal leadership, planning, responsibility, and individual and collective advocacy and engagement.

Diverse Ability Incorporated is a newly established corporation, that is awaiting Federal nonprofit designation, and although a recent addition to the disability community in Arizona, the structure and foundation of the organization is well supported. Diverse Ability Incorporated was created to meet a current goal in the Arizona State Plan for Independent Living, and will assume responsibility for continued implementation of three youth initiatives: Arizona Youth Leadership Forum (AZYLF) for Students and Transitioning Young Adults Who Have Disabilities; AZYLF Alumni Association; and Arizona Youth Engagement Academy; which exist to educate and mentor youth who have disabilities as they transition to adulthood. These youth initiatives were developed and have been implemented by Melissa Ann Santora, the Founding Executive Director of Diverse Ability Incorporated.

More than half of the members of the Diverse Ability Incorporated Board of Directors are youth who have disabilities, and the others are well established, well connected, and well respected elders who have long served people who have disabilities, in Arizona. In addition, Diverse Ability Incorporated has the support of parent organization, Arizona Statewide Independent Living Council, and a number of other agencies who have come to appreciate the positive impact of the youth initiatives, and who have collaborated in these endeavors.

Through AZYLF, staff and Board members of Diverse Ability Incorporated have worked closely with Arizona Department of Education, Centers for Independent Living, Office for Children with Special Health Care Needs, Raising Special Kids, Rehabilitation Services Administration, Sonoran University Center on Excellence in Developmental Disabilities, Special Olympics Arizona, and other disability-centric Governor's Councils, including the Arizona Developmental Disabilities Planning Council. These and other partnerships are critical for the success of the organization, and will serve the Emerging Me: Middle School Matters program well.

2. Arizona Youth Engagement Academy (AZYEA) is an intensive training experience designed to build capacity in youth who have disabilities to assume leadership roles, and provide peer to peer mentoring, training, and support. Youth who have a variety of disabilities, including intellectual and developmental disabilities, have received, and are delivering training around self-discovery, self-advocacy, self-determination, and have been certified as Person-Centered Planning Facilitators through AZYEA. These youth, will provide the student training and Self-Advocacy planning components of the Emerging Me: Middle School Matters program. In addition, because of the preparation provided through AZYEA, it is likely that one of these youth, will become the successful candidate to be hired as the Youth Engagement Coordinator for this program. AZYEA, and the opportunities afforded AZYEA graduates through the Emerging Me: Middle School Matters program, meets the goal of this grant, which is to: "Establish, strengthen, and expand self-advocacy activities among persons with developmental disabilities so they become empowered to be self-determined," as well as the objectives of providing leadership opportunities for youth who have intellectual and developmental disabilities to engage as leaders, provide peer mentoring, and contribute positively to the culture of disability in our state.

The other two components of the Emerging Me: Middle School Matters program only strengthen and expand the impact of meeting these goals and objectives, by offering youth who do and do not have disabilities opportunities to participate in a journey of self-discovery together, in a shared experience, that emphasizes commonalities, and equalizes all. The program further provides opportunity for people who have intellectual and developmental disabilities by educating the community about the importance of valuing the contributions of all of its residents, and raising the collective conscious of the community regarding disability and other diversities.

Through Arizona Youth Leadership Forum (AZYLF) for Students and Transitioning Young Adults Who have Disabilities, and AZYEA, Diverse Ability Incorporated has an abundance of knowledge, skills, passion, and experience in implementing innovative, relevant, and highly impactful programs for the betterment of people who have disabilities, their families, supporters, and communities. However, it is critical to recognize that by the time a high school aged youth comes to AZYLF, or a graduate of AZYLF comes to AZYEA, they are so behind in the developmental process of self-discovery, that self-advocacy and the practice of self-determination for most are unfamiliar concepts. Arizona must do better, and with Emerging Me: Middle School Matters, we will.